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Martyrs of the Arabian Peninsula

Story of the Martyr

Salman al-San'ani

Hani Abd Abdu Muslih Sha'lan



In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Never have I forgotten, and never will I forget, the night when one of the brothers came to me, informing me that there was a person looking for me!

The time for evening prayer approached as I shook hands with that brother, with whom I was not previously well-acquainted. After we had spoken a little and had a brief conversation, it dawned on me that he was of the three brothers who had come to meet me. After the evening prayer we left the mosque, and crossed the neighborhood on foot, discussing the matter for which they had come.

It was preparation and Jihad. They wanted to find a way as quickly as possible - any way - to go to Afghanistan for preparation and Jihad. They asked and inquired about everything: travel matters, the situation in Afghanistan, etc... Gradually I noticed that that one of them would never raise his glance to us, and would not utter a word until all were silent. I was amazed at his decorum and character.

Afterwards, we parted ways, agreeing to meet again the next day, and that they would start the process of obtaining visas and preparing their personal papers for travel, and I would find for them the way.

With the passage of a few days and increasing preoccupations, they became less enthusiastic and their determination weakened. Their number decreased from three to two and then from two to one. The determination of that one, however, and his determination to travel and prepare for Jihad in the path of Allah, his patience for long periods of waiting - approaching almost a year - raised the number back up to two, because I became determined to go with him! We became brothers in Allah, and I ask Allah, Sublime and Exalted, that this fraternal link be pure to His Noble Face, and that He join us, and all who love Him, together on minarets of light on the Day of Judgment.



This man of culture, refinement and noble character was Abu Bara' Hani Abdu Muslih Sha'lan, "Salman al-San'ani", known in Afghanistan as "**Julaybib al-Ibbi**".

He was born in *Balad al-Haramain* (Saudi Arabia), in Riyadh. He was of Yemeni origin, the state of Ibb in Aden. At an early age, he moved from Saudi Arabia to Sanaa and settled there in the al-Sitteen district near the al-Baraka mosque. Usually he attended the al-Nasr mosque in a neighboring district to pray there.

He was raised in a conservative family which was strict in Deen and morality and known for its decency and virtues. He married a righteous woman - we regard her as such and Allah is her Judge - and she gave him a son who is 14 months old. Abu Bara' never saw him from the time his son was born until he died, may Allah have mercy on him, because Abu Bara' had already joined his Mujahideen brothers before his wife told him of the birth of Bara'. The news came to him while he was stationed with the brothers in one of the provinces.

I never developed a bond of brotherhood with any of the brothers with whom I lived on the path of Jihad like the bond that grew between me and brother Abu Bara', except the bond between me and brother Talal Majrad al-San'ani¹, may Allah have mercy on him. But the longest and most difficult period I spent in the land of Jihad and what followed afterward was spent with Abu Bara'. It was almost eight years, starting from that time we made our determination to travel and began our preparations for it, until he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.

I will briefly discuss that period, Allah willing.

When I came to know him, only a year had passed since he had made his commitment. We did not separate for almost a year until Allah made it possible for us to travel to Afghanistan.

There we entered the training camps, and were later transferred to the front line north of Kabul - the Bagram line. This was almost two weeks after the killing of Ahmad Shah Masood and the New York and Washington raids. We stayed there until we withdrew on the 17th of Sha'ban towards Jalalabad, following the collapse of the line. We ascended the Tora Bora mountains on the first day of Ramadan in the same year.

During that period, the traits of that virtuous young man became clear to me, and other traits became apparent in addition to those which I learned and perceived in Sanaa. It has been said that travel reveals the character of the man, and that trials and hardships show his essence.

I found these traits in brother Abu Bara': he was pious - we judge him so but Allah is his Judge - mild-mannered, congenial, of sound heart, candid of speech, modest of glance, merciful to the Believers, harsh against the disbelievers, great of morals and praiseworthy characteristics which I perceived, and all who knew and lived with him perceived.

¹ He was amir of the Arabs in northern Afghanistan after the death of Abdul Salam al-Hadrami - may Allah rest their souls - and was among the first killed in Qala Janki . He was only 23 years old at that time, but his equanimity, good character and strong personality made the brothers think that he was over 30.

Because of these qualities, brother Abu Bara' was to me the best helper, supporter and confidante. I here quote from Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, may Allah have mercy on him, and say: *"Every time I say farewell to a brother martyred on this path – the path of Jihad – I learned that I was not deserving of martyrdom yet. Martyrs have qualities and morals, some of which I have not yet attained"*.

One day brother Abu Bara' refused to accept a small sweet I was trying to give him as a gift when we were in the training camps. Sweets were permitted in our camp but not permitted in their training camp. He said to me: *"The Amir forbade it, and I must not disobey the Amir"*, even though he, may Allah have mercy on him, was able to take it - as some of them did - and eat it without anyone seeing it.

He was - may Allah have mercy on him - the most zealous of men in avoiding taboos and being wary of specious arguments, and steering clear of forbidden acts. He was the most reputable of people and always obedient to the Amirs.

In the Tora Bora mountains Abu Bara' was distinguished by his patience and steadfastness. It was a period of harsh encampment upon the men, and became even harsher from the 17th day of Ramadan, when intensive American aerial bombing began night and day. It grew more and more severe when the mercenary Afghan hypocrites and apostates began to form a first line of defense behind which American and Afghan ground forces advanced towards the Mujahideen bases in the mountains. The situation continued like that until the withdraw order came from the Amir of the Qaeda al-Jihad Organization; Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah protect him, after the whole world had gathered against us; foreign infidels and Arab apostates. All roads were cut and the bombing intensified. We became besieged from almost every direction. That was on the 28th day of Ramadan when we withdrew from the Tora Bora mountains.

We left everything except our weapons and were determined to return to the land of Jihad. After everyone gathered in the appointed place to begin the withdrawal, a messenger came from the Amir who had been appointed to command by Sheikh Usama before the withdrawal. He was Commander Ibn Sheikh al-Libi² - may Allah have mercy on him. The messenger said that Ibn Sheikh wanted a group of no more than ten men to form an imaginary line in front of enemy detachments, which had begun to advance and pursue the Mujahideen, to stop them and make them think that the Mujahideen had remained in their positions, so that the brothers would be able to withdraw safely. Abu Bara' was on that group who volunteered for this task and this sacrifice. He went back with them, with a spirit of high morale, audacity and love of sacrifice. That group was the last group to withdraw with Ibn Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have mercy on him.

The withdrawal continued on foot for three days without halt except for a few hours of sleep. Most of the brothers couldn't even sleep because of the severe cold, and the snow that completely covered those mountains.

2 He was commander of the Khaldun training camp in Afghanistan, slain under torture in the prisons of the Taghut Moamar Qaddafi after he was extradited from Guantanamo to Libya. There was an attempt to smuggle him from the prison in Pakistan before he was handed over to American forces, but he refused saying *"These are my sons (meaning the brothers imprisoned with him), how can I abandon them and flee?"* May Allah have abundant mercy on him.

In that suffering, brother Abu Bara', may Allah have mercy on him, would revive the ardor of our spirit, patience, and forbearance and he always seemed to be tolerant, tranquil and patient.

Afterwards, Allah, Exalted and Almighty, fated that we were all taken prisoner on American orders and with international financial support and through the treachery of Pakistani Rejectionists, with the exception of those who were killed or died³ or those who were able to escape, the number of whom could be counted on one's fingers.

We were delivered from the hands of the Pakistani apostates to the hands of the American kuffar in Qandahar. From there we were transferred to Guantanamo prison in batches over approximately five months. Brother Abu Bara' was transferred with the first groups, and I was with the last. The period between us was approximately two months.

After I arrived at Guantanamo, one of the Kuwaiti brothers, who arrived there two months before we did in the same batch as Abu Bara', said to me: *"Hani loves you for the sake of Allah!"* He continued saying: *"We were in the old prison⁴, from which no leaves to walk or to bathe due to intentional mistreatment by the American soldiers. They would place iron shackles on our arms or legs then push us roughly forward. Anyone who tried to keep steady and lean backwards so as not to fall, they would drag him to the bathing or walking area. So we refrained from going out, and this was what they wanted, because going out was optional."*

The brother said: *"In spite of all that. I would see Hani going out with them every day and he appeared to be in pain. So I said to him: Don't go out with them Hani, sit back here with the rest of the brothers. You don't need that!"* And the brother said to me: *"Do you know what Hani replied? He replied: I just want to be put at ease that 'so-and-so' has arrived"* - meaning your poor servant! - *"I want to see him."*

And I say, *"I will not be at ease until Allah gathers us together in his Paradise, Abu Bara'"*

In prison, Abu Bara' was a model of high spirits, patience and devotion. Despite the great suffering we were experiencing, he was able through the will of Allah to expertly memorize the Book of Allah in less than two years, in addition to reading and recitation of the Quran, as well as memorizing a number of scientific journals.

He - may Allah have mercy on him - used to divert and entertain his brothers with his beautiful voice singing nasheeds at times, or delivering moving speeches, he would occasionally write for them at other times. Abu Bara' would do physical training and exercises with his brothers and obtained a black belt in Tai Kwon Do.

Prison did not stop him from continuing his previous devotions and worship, especially reading and studying the Quran, fasting on Mondays and Thursdays and

3 I mean those who died or were killed during the withdrawal or capture, before the withdrawal the number of slain was great.

4 The old prison to which the first groups were transferred. After the new camp was equipped, they were transferred there.

sometimes fasting every other day. Indeed he continued his devotions after his release until he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.

In prison I would bring him glad tidings of my vision that we would be released on the day of the Eid. I was indeed released five days before Eid al-Idha - almost nine months before Abu Bara' was released. He was released the eve of Eid al-Fitr the following year.

After his release from prison, may Allah have mercy on him, what used to concern and preoccupy him was how to join the Mujahideen anywhere. He was always asking about the Mujahideen in Yemen, and would say to me: *"If you find the path to any land in which there is Jihad, I am with you"*. He would affirm that repeatedly. My brother Abu Bara' had poor eyesight, but strong insight. Allah, Exalted and Almighty, willed that we join our Mujahideen brothers in Yemen, and achieved for me that for which I had been longing, which was to continue on this path in the company of brother Abu Bara'.

A year after we were released from prison, precisely at dawn, Thursday, the 30th day of Dhul-Hijja 1430 H, brother Abu Bara' had a date with martyrdom, when he and those who were in his company fell under American-Yemeni aerial bombardment, which targeted them while they were on a Jihadist mission, may Allah have mercy on them.

The life of Abu Bara', may Allah have mercy on him, from the year after his commitment to his Deen, was all spent in the path of Allah. This has been made clear in this brief biography, which does not permit providing much detail.

In the last letter he sent me approximately a month before his death, may Allah have mercy on him, he said to me: *"Pray that I be granted martyrdom"*. I consider that he was true to Allah and Allah was true to him.

O Abu Bara', you were one of those who sold everything except their religion, and relinquished everything except their principles, abandoned everything but their values and morals.

People choose life as a way to death, but you chose death as a way to death. Take delight in that life.

You traveled to the Gardens of 'Aden, in which are your mansions and camp

O Abu Bara':

If it is difficult to meet in this world, we will meet in the mansions of immortality and that is enough

May Allah's prayers, peace, blessings and mercy upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his Companions.

**Penned by
Saif Mansoor**